



French-English Association for a bilingual education

NEWS LETTER

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- **FRENZ'S MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW DUE**
- **The Bursary Commission will meet on the 11th of April.**

THE YEAR TO DATE by Valérie Levergne translated by Joanne Commarieu

The beginning of 2003 sees a major change within our area. A change which we have spent years fighting for, and which brings our original objective back into reality. Certainly, this is due to perseverance on our part, but mainly because we are lucky enough to have a Principal who understands completely, the term "bilingual education".

Are you guessing?

I refer to the percentage of teaching in French within the junior class. In 2000, the children received 60% of their education in French. In 2001, it fell to 48%, and 2002 saw it climb slightly back to 56%. And in 2003, it has reached 80% the mark recognized by bilingual experts as the recommended level required to immerse young children in a minority language and for them to develop a solid base. What a fabulous

achievement!

Did you know that the number of students in Ropu 5 climaxed at 60 in December 2002? At the beginning of this year we have 48 – 17 in the junior class, and 31 in the seniors.

The junior class has been reorganized to level the difference of age and skills.

... the percentage of teaching in French within the junior class... has reached 80% the mark recognized by bilingual experts

Vesna Nikolic the class teacher has 17 children working between the levels of "Grande Section" and "CE1". The children will be with Vesna for four full days a week and Friday will be spent learning English informally while participating in school activities. – assembly, sport, singing, and cultural exchange times.

As parents, we are going to notice a marked improvement in our children's French linguistic abilities.

They were many in Maryse Varaine's senior class, but little by little, the role is decreasing. By the end of the term, we will have returned to our usual numbers with about 23 students. The division of French/English in this class has not altered, remaining at 3 days per week in French and 2 in English. Miss Ritu Chowdhary is no longer our English teacher, and we warmly welcome a masculine presence in the senior class in the form of Mr Andrew Dwyer, Andy and his guitar have already conquered our children's hearts.

Our assistant, Laura Théry has left us to return to France where she plans to pick up her career after a sabbatical year of discovery in New Zealand. We wish her much success.

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BRAVO TO THE SWISS !!! by Valérie Levergne, translated by Joanne Commarieu

A perfect campaign, an uncontested victory, an adventure with a good ending, bravo!

I would be lying if I said

that I didn't have mixed feelings. Of course, I would have loved to have seen the Cup stay in New Zealand for reasons we all know. On the other hand, being Euro-

pean and looking from the historical perspective of the prestigious race, what an unbelievable victory! For the first time since it

(see page 3)

THE YEAR TO DATE (cont from page 1)

Laura is a warm, fun-loving person whose enthusiasm the children will surely miss. I will be replacing Laura in this area, a task I am looking forward to.

We will avoid talking about the week-long summer camp by the sea, which should have been a wonderful adventure full of new sporting activities but which unhappily was cut short due to

inclement weather conditions. This week finished catastrophically when Donal, one of Ropu 2's teachers, broke his leg in three places! We wish him much courage with the crutches and a speedy recovery.

Our children and teachers have not been idle these last months. Take the time to enter the classrooms and admire their work posted on the walls;

marvelous pictures, varied and full of talent! ■

GOODBYE ISABELLE : by Valérie Levergne translated by Vincent Commarieu

Frenz lost a president, but I lost a friend

She is gone, the long familiar boyish silhouette, with her short cut curly hair, her deep and low pitched voice, her eternal trousers or shorts whose colour was always chosen with flair. We will not see her anymore around Ropu 5. Tirelessly, she explained to the new parents the role of the association and its 'raison d'être'. She kept enquiring of all, concerned about everyone. She relayed our obligations with a smile but with a firm voice, and always with well-chosen words.

She embraced the presidentship of Frenz with vigor and heart. Following in Nadine's footsteps was a challenge in itself. Having a clear and enterprising mind, she firmly navigated, never losing her objective. Open and direct, never backward going forward, she always expressed herself with eloquence.

I will greatly miss working with her... but there is one thing I am sure of : I will not regret all these cigarettes smells which she could not stop enjoying so much ! ■



GOODBYE ISABELLE : by Susan Stewart translated by Véronique Gérard

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Isabelle Billion, President of FRENZ and parent at Richmond Road School. Although Isabelle only took on the role of president at the last AGM, she has been an active member of FRENZ, more or less since conception. Her commitment to FRENZ and its "raison d'être" has been passionate and dedicated. She has worked tirelessly with others to build on the achievements of the French Ropu at RRS, planning for a French Early Childhood Centre. This is crucial if the unit is to be sustain-

Isabelle has not only provided this energy and enthusiasm to FRENZ but to RRS as well

able in the long term. This commitment has required a never ending supply of energy, tenacity often in the face of resistance and great diplo-

macy, never more evident than at the end of last year with various factions at the school. She has been a fantastic advocate for FRENZ, and long may she continue to be so in France.

Isabelle has not only provided this energy and enthusiasm to FRENZ but to RRS as well. She has made herself available for all fundraising and so-

cial events. Her departure leaves a very big hole for FRENZ and the school.

All and all, I don't believe FRENZ and Ropu 5 would be where they are today without Isabelle's contribution. We also recognize the support her husband has given over the years as well.

We thank you sincerely Isabelle and wish you well for the future but please don't hesitate to return should you feel the pull of the 'great white cloud'. We would welcome you back with open arms. ■

BRAVO LES SUISSES !!! par Valérie Levergne (suite de la page 1)

began nearly 150 years ago (don't quote me) the America's Cup goes to Europe: How exciting!

I want to thank our Swiss friends whose presence in our classes and in the life of the school has enriched us all. I thank also, the Maori class and the school for the moving farewell ceremony they performed. Our friends leave each with a wonderful



symbol of friendship and peace. They received small, plaited, flax baskets, a symbol of the Pacific culture, a plaited flax flower, a symbol of the Maori culture, and inside the baskets, Easter eggs, a symbol of the European culture.

A safe return to you all, I wish you all the best in your reintegration into your communities. ■

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE by Valérie Levergne

When we learned that our application for Ministry of Education discretionary funding had been unsuccessful in November last year, we quickly examined the possibility of using a third site within the school. We hoped to make good use of the available space in front of the school at the corner of Richmond Road and Douglas Street. We thought we could maximize the space in Ropu 3 itself by building an upper floor without altering the roof line. Unfortunately, this informal proposal was unsupported by members of the Board. People believed there would be opposition from the community to altering the frontage of this historic building. The ECC would require a deck and wide openings.

In light of these recent discussions, FRENZ feels our emphasis should be



in researching potential areas outside of RRS and sourcing financial backing.

FRENZ remains as committed as ever to the development of an ECC as this is the only way we will ensure the sustainability of Ropu 5 for the years to come. The interest of the community at large for such a project is a great incentive knowing there were more than a 100 pre-enrollments last year. ■

LOCAL SHORTS FESTIVAL by Valérie Levergne and Susan Stewart



Richmond Road School organized two fabulous evenings of entertainment.

Friday 21st of March was meant for children with a collection of cartoons and humorist films. A fine persistent

drizzle could not dampen the enthusiasm of the dressed up fans. A cohort of children looking like their big screen heroes marched across the stage in front of a crowd nestled under their umbrellas. This evening was presented by Robert Blake and Stacey Daniels from Mai FM who certainly added to the entertainment for the children.

On Saturday night we screened a selection of international and New Zealand short films, which included a variety of styles resulting in an interesting and entertaining evening. Celebrity MC's Carol Hirschfeld and

John Campbell, a truly fun duo, from TV3 presented the evening. The school community had organized different sorts of foods with a bonus that all proceeds went back to the relevant Ropus. Ropu 5 made about \$120.00 (fantastic effort to all those parents who contributed a plate). Thank you to Michèle Chaudesaigues et Valérie Levergne who served the food, to Cathy Carter and Susan Stewart who served wine and coffee. People enjoyed the evening in a relaxed and comfortable manner (and it wasn't even raining!).

The school raised \$10 000. Bravo! ■

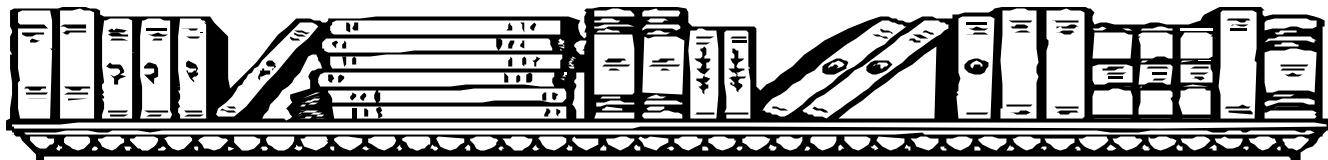
THE LIBRARY by Valérie Levergne

Are your children familiar with Ratus, Petit Cheval Excité, Max et Lili, Tomtom et Nana, Fantomette, Croc-blancs, le prince Eric, among so many others ? Whether your child is an advanced reader, starting to enjoy reading by him or herself or discovering books and their pictures, our library can fulfil your needs and

give your child a lot of pleasure.

Do you wish to increase the French language exposure at home without giving up that little peaceful moment you enjoy when the children are sitting in front of the TV ? Come and choose a few videos from among the 115 available to you.

Do not hesitate to talk about our library to others around you, to your friends and relatives. It is a great resource and it needs to be better known among the French speaking community. ■



MARCH ALMANAC

Proverb : (litteral translation)

To convey that something arrives on time, infallibly, we say :

She arrives like March for Lent.

When March is lovely and dry, the sellar and barrel will be full.

Flowers in March, won't give a lot of fruits.

March hail-storms break through all armours

Poème :

Sans regret l'hiver meurt.
Le printemps se réveille.
Les jumeaux s'émerveillent
Et dégustent les fleurs.

Zodiac :

Pisces, water sign, from the 20th of February till the 21st of March.

Important dates :

It is spring from the 20th or 21st of March till the 20th or 21st of June. During the spring equinox (21st or 22nd of March) day time is as long as night time. ■

NOTICES

If you have good quality toys your children have outgrown taking up too much room in your cupboards, we would love them for our French Early Childhood Centre. Contact Valérie: (09) 636 4860. Thank you. ■

We are looking for someone to set up a web site for the association. If you have the required skills, and if you wish to help us, contact Valérie: (09) 636 4860. Thank you. ■



English as a second language is offered at Richmond Road School as an after school class. Fun Language uses a professionally designed course involving songs, drama, crafts and lots of lively games with the emphasis always on Fun ! If interested please phone Maroussia : (09) 845 6352. ■



Drama
Fridays 3.15 - 4.15 pm

Teacher :
Michel Cassin

Age Group : 7 +

Location : Richmond
Road School Hall

Fees : \$50 / term



Homework
help
Wednesdays
3.15 - 4.15
pm

Teacher : Patrick Miegerville
Age Group : 5 +
Location : Richmond Road School
Ropu 5
Fees : \$50 / term

Reading extension
Wednesdays 3.15 - 4.15 pm

Teacher : Patrick Miegerville

Age Group : 6 +

Location : Rich-
mond Road School
Ropu 5

Fees : \$50 / term



STUDENTS' CORNER

Appropriate proverbs ! :

I am not worried about him because
he is quick to talk and answer :
He has the gift of the gab.

He listens eagerly, he is very
attentive :
He is all eyes and ears.

You are sitting quietly in class, you
never do silly things :
You are as good as gold

She is absent minded, inattentive,
vacant :
She is in the clouds. ■

« My week at camp » by Claire
Bonnedeau

On Monday 24th of February, the
seniors went by bus or by car to camp
at Peter Snell's Youth Village. The
journey was long. We arrived at
around 10.30 am.

When I got in, I started by settling
into my bedroom with my friends
called : Amélie, Mady, Margaux,
Muriel, Manon, Nathalie and Vicky. I
was on the window's side. Mady was
beneath.

Sports with Tu was our first activity.
Then we went to the beach. The next
morning we went to the kitchen to do
some weaving. A little later, we
changed groups. We drew leaves and
competed. We had to make something
with leaves and sticks.

The next morning we came back to
the school because it was dangerous
to stay because the weather was not
good. ■

HUMOUR

Céline pratique le son [a].
Maman : - Est-ce que tu entends [a] dans chocolat ?
Céline : - Oui.
Maman : - Bien ! Est-ce que tu entends [a] dans canard ?
Céline : - Oui.
Maman : - Excellent ! Et dans livre, tu entends le son
[a] ?
Céline : - Oui.
Maman : - Ah bon ! Tu es sûre ?
Céline : - Bah oui, maman, dans les pages !!! ■

NOTICES (cont from page 4)



For children aged 11-14
who already speak French ...
an after-school class to further enrich your French, with oral and written work on
topics ranging from current affairs to literature and history.

Tuesdays 3.45 – 5.15 pm

Teacher : Patrick Miegerville
a fully qualified native-speaking French teacher

Location : Ponsonby Intermediate School
Room 1, Clarence Street, Ponsonby

Fees : \$120 / term

FROM « A PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' GUIDE TO BILINGUALISM » BY COLIN BAKER (MULTILINGUAL MATTERS LTD, 1995)

Will learning a second language interfere with development in the first language ?

The answer is no, definitely not. Even if children may mix languages at first, in the long term, research suggests that becoming bilingual has positive effects on language development, including on the first language. Having more than one word to describe objects, ideas or concepts will expand rather than contract the mind.

To think that there is one drawer in our brain to store language and that adding another language to that drawer is cutting the drawer in half resulting in two half filled language compartments is incorrect. It seems there are no limits to a person's learning and knowledge. As for languages they are not compartmentalized and transfers between them occur all the time. Once a child understands what adding numbers means for example it can do it in any language as long as it has the vocabulary for it. The concept is acquired and does not need to be retaught in an other language.

Therefore, a more accurate picture of a bilingual child's two languages, is that of a dual iceberg. Each language above the water line is separate, but below they merge in an area of common thinking, servicing and supplying both languages whereby expanding the mind.

Should my child keep the two languages separate in different situations and with different people (e.g. visitors) ?

It is essential in raising children bilingually to keep the context of children's languages compartmentalized. Experts on bilingualism stress the importance of clear language boundaries. Consistent language separation is important and aids in bilingual development.

Consistent language separation is important and aids in bilingual development.

Some of the strategies are : one parent, one language ; the home vs the outside world ; week days in the minority language and week ends in the majority language ; alternate days ; for bilingual schools, two days in English, three days in French or mornings in English, afternoons in French.

Children themselves tend to create their own language boundaries especially when they are young. These boundaries will change and become more sophisticated as they grow older. Accepting and manipulating these language boundaries is part of bilingual development. For exemple if a child is used to communicate in the minority language within its family only, it will be bemused or startled to hear others speak the language.

However, it is not always easy to make language compartmentalization. The guiding principle is for parents to achieve an approximate balance in the quality and quantity of the two languages experienced by the child. This needs careful thinking and consideration. For example in the case of one parent - one language, which language is going to be the family language ?

It is highly recommended that families establish some home language rules and have a plan of action to address situations that may disrupt these rules. An understanding in the family will give language strength to that family. For example, what to do when visitors using the majority language come in ? Do we switch to their language ? Do we keep the home language and translate ? Do we address them in the majority language and the family members in the minority one ? There are no correct answers and these will vary with cultures, family etiquettes, personal relationships, social situations. The important thing is to remain natural, well mannered and to enjoy having two languages. The ability to switch languages purposefully is a valuable bilingual's skill and a sign of language accomplishment. ■

FRENZ 'S AGM FOR 2003 by Susan Stewart

Many thanks to all those who attended the AGM this year. FRENZ committee presented to all who attended, the reports of the association summarising the events, achieve-

ments of 2002 and the objectives for 2003. The position of Senior Vice President was create and will be reviewed yearly. Nadine Plet was nominated for that position. Valérie

Levergne is our new President, Joanne Commariou our Vice President, Susan Stewart our secretary, Michèle Chaudesaigues our treasurer, and Cathy Carter and Peter Schwarz

FRENZ 'S AGM FOR 2003 (cont from page 6)

are committee members. Please, if you were unable to attend the meeting and would like to read the reports on finances, Ropu 5, the library, Presidents or the Early Childhood Education Project, contact either Valérie Levergne or Susan Stewart for a copy.

We were very fortunate this year to have a guest speaker in the form of John McCaffery, who is a senior lec-

turer at Auckland Teacher's College and is presently writing his Ph.D. on Bilingualism. He was extremely engaging and informative on the subject of bilingualism. In light of the recent changes in the Junior class regarding the ratio of French/English tuition he was able to answer many queries and support his responses with research. He is very keen to come back and extend on the evenings talk, which we would greatly welcome.

This year we intended to make the AGM more inviting and interesting. With Ms Hayley Read and Maryse Varaine securing a guest speaker and with providing the opportunity for people to mix and mingle over coffee and sweets, it was successful. The feedback has been very positive. Thanks to all those who contributed to the evening. We look forward to a full and successful year ■

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